

Important Advances in Clinical Medicine

Epitomes of Progress -- Preventive Medicine and Public Health

The Scientific Board of the California Medical Association presents the following inventory of items of progress in Preventive Medicine and Public Health. Each item, in the judgment of a panel of knowledgeable physicians, has recently become reasonably firmly established, both as to scientific fact and important clinical significance. The items are presented in simple epitome and an authoritative reference, both to the item itself and to the subject as a whole is generally given for those who may be unfamiliar with a particular item. The purpose is to assist the busy practitioner, student, research worker or scholar to stay abreast of these items of progress in Preventive Medicine and Public Health which have recently achieved a substantial degree of authoritative acceptance, whether in his own field of special interest or another.

The items of progress listed below were selected by the Advisory Panel to the Section on Preventive Medicine and Public Health of the California Medical Association and the summaries were prepared under its direction.

Reprint requests to: Division of Scientific and Educational Activities, 693 Sutter Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94102

Rabies

Treatment of rabies begins with emergency care of the bite. If the skin is not broken, no treatment is indicated. The wound should be irrigated thoroughly with 20 percent soap solution or some other antiseptic. It must be verified that the biting animal is rabid, if possible. Of all identified rabid animals, approximately 75 percent are wild animals. Records of the Cali-

fornia State Department of Public Health, over an 18-year period and 25,000 examinations, show that gophers, mice, hamsters, squirrels, and similar animals have not had one case of rabies. Biting animals which can spread rabies should be confined for 10 days to see if they show symptoms of the disease. Carriers of rabies, such as bats, should have their brain tissue examined immediately.

Persons with severe bites, especially on the head, should be given antirabies serum and vaccine unless the biting animal has a current rabies vaccination. Serum should be given in a single dose—40 International Units (IU) per kilogram of body weight. At the same time, DEV or Semple vaccine should be started. Daily injections should be continued for 14 to 21 days if the animal is proved to be rabid. Reactions to DEV